



Questions To Ask the Potential Mentor

Office of Training and Diversity
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Having a mentor throughout your career increases the opportunity for successful professional advancement and advanced research capabilities. Before choosing a mentor, it is important to determine what type of mentor is best suited to your goals and objectives. Below is a list of suggested questions to ask your potential mentor. Keep in mind that some of the questions may not be relevant to your anticipated level of training.

- Will I have my own project?
- Will there be regular opportunities for communication to discuss my research?
- Are there others in the laboratory who are resources for questions or assistance if you are not available?
- What do you expect a trainee at my level to accomplish in terms of having command of the literature, planning experiments, possessing knowledge of mentoring techniques, understanding the research and its context, and communicating orally and in writing?
- How much independence will I have in terms of planning and executing experiments, determining the direction of research, and analyzing and interpreting results?
- Will I have opportunities to increase my independence?
- Will I be able to take time from the laboratory to participate in and attend seminars and workshops?
- Are you available for career advice and assistance with the application process to graduate and medical schools?
- Will I be able to take time off to attend interviews with prospective universities?
- Will I have the opportunity to participate in collaborations?
- Will I have the opportunity to publish?
- What opportunities will you provide to learn about the management of laboratory resources?
- Will I have the opportunity to mentor trainees?
- How will you give me feedback on my professional development?

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